

simple steps for raising healthy kids

Fall 2000

A big welcome...

Congratulations and welcome to our news 5-star program participants!

Benton Co. Head Start
Community Day Care of Gibson Co.
First Street Day Care of Steuben Co.
Fountain/Warren Head Start of Fountain Co.
Khids DayCare of Howard Co.
Kids Place Austin of Scott Co.
My School of Lake County
Nannies Daycare of Warrick County
Polk's Little Folks Daycare of Howard Co.



IDEM's Northwest Regional Office Director, Adriane Esparza, awards 5 stars to Kathy Hruby, director of My School.

All but one of these providers is the first in their county to participate in this program. Benton and Fountain County Head Starts, are the first head start facilities in the state to earn the full 5 stars. **Way to go!**

This fall marks Child Health and Safety Awareness

September

Baby Safety Month
Children's Eye Health and Safety Month
Cold and Flu Campaign
National Food Safety Education Month
23-24 Family Health and Fitness Days USA

November

16 Great American Smokeout

October

Child Health Month
Family Health Month
Healthy Lung Month
National Campaign for Healthier Babies Month
2 Child Health Day
2-6 Walk a Child to School Week
8-14 National Fire Prevention Week
15-21 National Hepatitis Awareness Week
15-21 National Radon Week
15-22 National Infection Control Week
15-21 National Health Education Week

Information Provided by National Health Information Center

Every School
Should Take
This
Simple Test.



Radon in Schools

(Second Edition)

Provided by the Environmental Protection Agency

Chances are you've already heard of radon - a radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. But what you might not have heard is that high levels have been found in a number of schools across the country. Therefore, it is important that students, teachers, and parents be aware that a potential problem could exist in their school. A nationwide survey of radon levels in schools estimates that nearly one in five has at least one schoolroom with a short-term radon level above the action level of 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter) - the level at which EPA recommends that schools take action to reduce the level. EPA estimates that more than seventy thousand (70,000) schoolrooms in use today have high short-term radon levels.

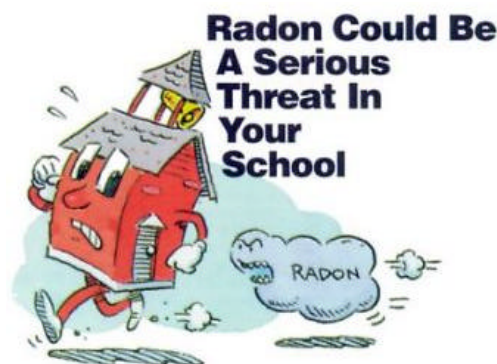
The EPA ranks indoor radon among the most serious environmental health problems facing us today. After smoking, it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States causing an estimated fourteen thousand

The only way to determine if a problem exists is to test for it. Having your school tested for radon is something you may want to discuss with your school officials. Because as real as the threat of radon is, the good news is that the problem can be solved.

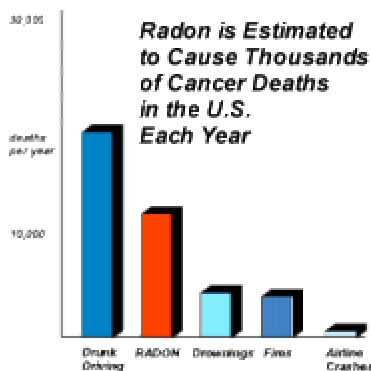
Radon is a naturally occurring gas that seeps into buildings from the surrounding soil. In some cases, well water may be a source of radon. You can't see, taste, or smell radon. In fact, the only way to discover if high levels of radon are present is through testing.

All students have the right to expect a safe and healthy environment. Teachers and other school employees should encourage their schools to conduct radon tests and undertake all necessary corrective actions. The health of our children demands no less. **Keith Geiger, NEA President.**

Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe. As these particles break down, they release small bursts of energy. This can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer over the course of your lifetime. An individual's risk of getting lung cancer from radon depends mostly on three factors: the level of radon, the duration of exposure, and their smoking habits.



**Radon
Contributes to
Thousands of
Deaths
Each Year.**

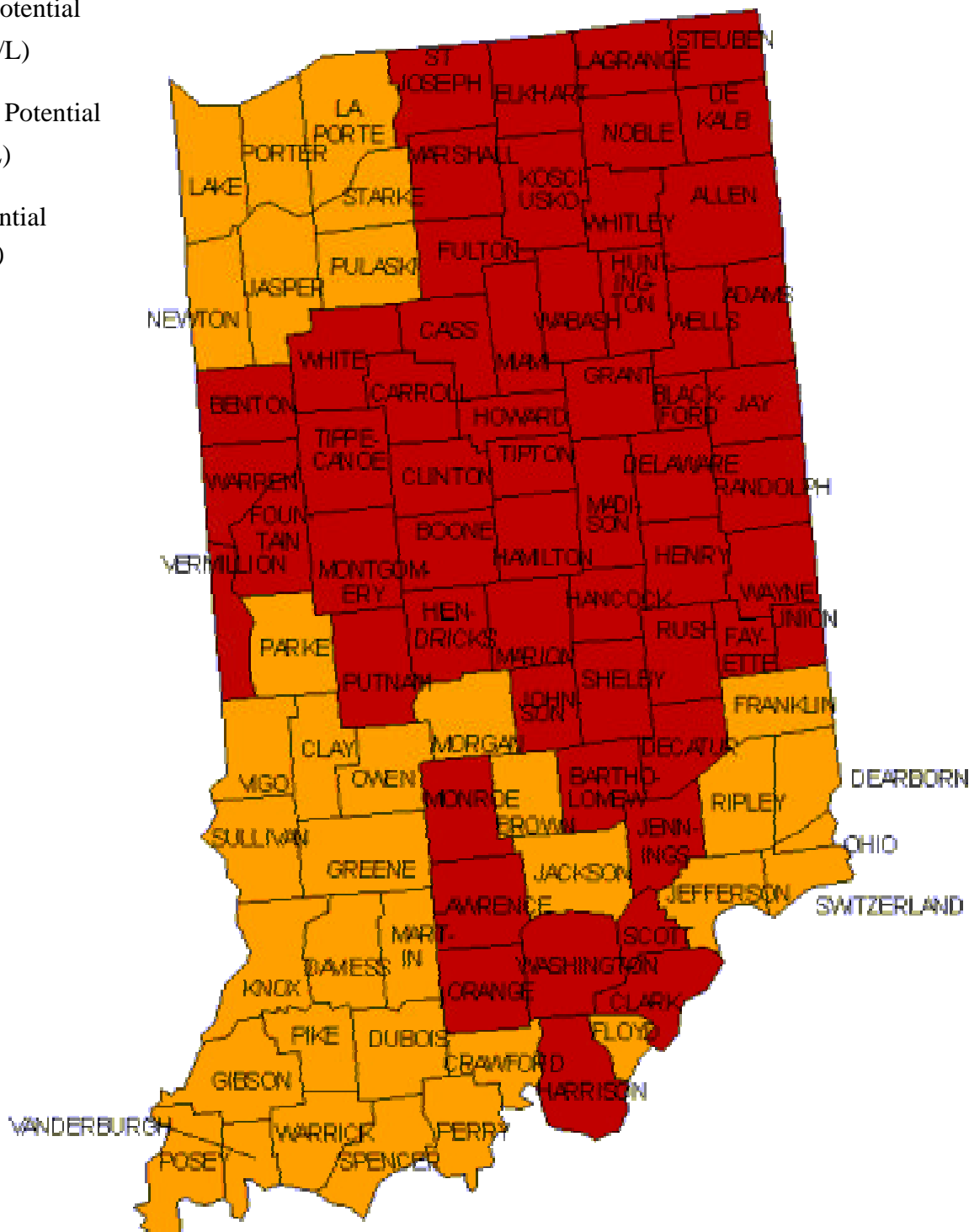


As participants in the 5-Star program, you have probably already tested your facility for radon. Let parents know you have done your part to protect their children while in your care and encourage them to test their homes.

INDIANA - EPA Map of Radon Zones

The U.S. EPA and the U.S. Geological Survey have evaluated the radon potential in the U.S. and have developed this map to assist National, State, and local organizations to target their resources and to assist building code officials in deciding whether radon-resistant features are applicable in new construction. This map is not intended to be used to determine if a home in a given zone should be tested for radon. Homes with elevated levels of radon have been found in all three zones. All homes should be tested regardless of geographic location. The map assigns each of the counties in the State to one of three zones based on radon potential. Each zone designation reflects the average short-term radon measurement that can be expected to be measured in a building without the implementation of radon control methods. The radon zone designation of the highest priority is Zone 1.

- Zone 1** Highest Potential
(greater than 4 pCi/L)
- Zone 2** Moderate Potential
(from 2 to 4 pCi/L)
- Zone 3** Low Potential
(less than 2 pCi/L)



Pest of the Season: The Secret Lives of Ants

by Stephanie Bailey

Entomology Extension Specialist (University of Kentucky Department of Entomology)

revised by Patricia Dillon



ACTIVITY #1 - Introduction

Even though ants are tiny, as a group they have a big impact on the natural world. All together, ants have the largest biomass of any group of animals on the earth. Ants are champion earthmovers--they move more earth than any other organism including earthworms (who are no slouches in the dirt-moving business, as you may know!).

Have kids draw or tell what they think is going on underneath the soil in an ant nest. What jobs do they do? What do they do for fun? Then read a book such as *Ant Cities*, by A. Dorros, *Ants* by W. Goetsch, or *Insect Societies* by E. O. Wilson.

ACTIVITY #2 - Ant Trails

Watch the ants coming and going in an outdoor ant colony. Encourage the students to form ideas about their movement:

Do they seem to follow each other?

How do they know where to go?

What advantage(s) would come from following another ant?

Form hypotheses and test some of these ideas. Here is an example of how to explore ideas about how the ants know where to go.

Observation: Many ants seem to be following the same path as the ant in front of them.

Question: How do they know where to go?

Possible Answers: They can see the ant in front of them; they know the way from having gone there before; there is some kind of signal on the trail that they are following; etc. (Try to think of as many ideas as possible here.)

Hypothesis: The ants are following some kind of signal on the trail. If this is true, we would expect that if we change the direction of the trail, the ants will go in the new direction.

Test:

1. Place a small piece of paper over an existing ant trail.
2. let ants relearn the trail over the paper, and
3. then rotate the paper. What happens to the trail? What do the ants do?
4. Rotate the paper back. What do the ants do?

Conclusions: What conclusions can you draw from these observations?

It turns out that when ants find food, they secrete an invisible chemical called "trail pheromone" as they return to the nest. This trail leads directly from the nest to the food source. Other worker ants then follow the trail right to the food. Each worker then reinforces the trail on the way back. When all the food is gone, the workers no longer secrete trail pheromone and eventually the trail fades away.

Younger students may enjoy pretending they are ants and making their own trails, using yarn, string, or pieces of paper to mark the trail for other "ants" to follow.

INDOOR Air Quality

Why is the environment indoors important to our health?

Most people are aware that outdoor air pollution can damage their health but may not know that indoor air pollution can also have significant effects. EPA studies of human exposure to air pollutants indicate that indoor air levels of many pollutants may be 2-5 times, and occasionally, more than 100 times higher than outdoor levels. These levels of indoor air pollutants are of particular concern because it is estimated that most people spend as much as 90% of their time indoors. Over the past several decades, our exposure to indoor air pollutants is believed to have increased due to a variety of factors, including the construction of more tightly sealed buildings, reduced ventilation rates to save energy, the use of synthetic building materials and furnishings, and the use of chemically formulated personal care products, pesticides, and household cleaners. In recent years, comparative risk studies performed by EPA and its Science Advisory Board (SAB) have consistently ranked indoor air pollution among the top five environmental risks to public health.

To access the indoor air quality of your building, EPA developed a these checklists as easy reference guides. The first checklist, "Teacher's Classroom Checklist", is enclosed with this newsletter. All the checklists are available on the web at: www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/tools4s2.html#IAQ Checklists

Teacher's Classroom Checklist
Administrative Staff Checklist
Health Officer/School Nurse Checklist
Ventilation Checklist and Log
Building Maintenance Checklist
Food Service Checklist

Waste Management Checklist
Renovation and Repairs Checklist
Walkthrough Inspection Checklist

Provided by the Environmental Protection Agency

The Asthma Epidemic

Asthma has reached epidemic proportions in the United States affecting about 17 million people of all ages and races, particularly children. Nearly one in 13 school-aged children has asthma, and the percentage of children with asthma is rising more rapidly in preschool-aged children than in any other age group. Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to a chronic illness, accounting for over 10 million missed school days per year. Asthma also accounts for many nights of interrupted sleep, limitation of activity, and disruption of family and care-giver routines. Asthma symptoms which are not severe enough to require a visit to an emergency room or to a physician can still be serious enough to prevent a child with asthma from living a fully active life.

Asthma is a long-term, inflammatory disease in which the airways of the lung tighten and constrict causing wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing. These symptoms can be at least partially reversed, either spontaneously or with treatment. The inflammation also causes the airways of the lung to become especially sensitive to a variety of asthma triggers. In addition, the particular trigger or triggers and the severity of symptoms can differ for each person with asthma.

Since Americans spend up to 90% of their time indoors, exposure to indoor allergens and irritants may play a significant role in triggering asthma episodes. Some of the most common asthma triggers found indoors include:

- animal dander
- cockroaches
- mold
- secondhand smoke
- dust mites

FALL CHECKLIST

Things to do before I turn on the heat:

- ❑ Install a Carbon Monoxide Detector
- ❑ Have a qualified technician inspect and clean the heating system

Carbon Monoxide

WHAT IS IT?

Carbon monoxide is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. Exposure to CO reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result. Hundreds of people die accidentally every year from CO poisoning caused by malfunctioning or improperly used fuel-burning appliances.

HEALTH EFFECTS

Breathing low levels of CO can cause shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches, and may have longer term effects on your health. Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, you may not think that CO poisoning could be the cause. Breathing higher levels of carbon monoxide causes flu-like symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, and weakness in healthy people. Carbon monoxide also causes sleepiness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and disorientation. At very high levels, it causes loss of consciousness and death. Nearly 300 people die every year from carbon monoxide exposure related to residential combustion appliances, and thousands of others become ill or seek medical attention.

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM CO POISONING

Any fuel-burning appliance that is not adequately vented and maintained can be a potential source of CO, including:

- gas appliances (furnaces, ranges, ovens, water heaters, clothes dryers, etc.)
- fireplaces,
- wood and coal stoves,
- space heaters,
- charcoal grills,
- automobile exhaust fumes,
- camp stoves,
- gas-powered lawn mowers, and power tools

Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning from exposure to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide in the home is possible by taking some simple steps:

- Make sure appliances are installed and working according to manufacturers' instructions and local building codes.
- Have only a qualified technician install or convert fuel-burning equipment from one type to another.
- Have the heating system, chimney and flue inspected and cleaned by a qualified technician every year.
- Do not use ovens and gas ranges to heat your home.
- Do not burn charcoal inside a home, cabin, recreational vehicle or camper.
- Do not operate gasoline-powered engines in confined areas such as garages or basements.
- Never leave your car or mower running in a closed garage.
- Make sure your furnace has adequate intake of outside air.
- Choose vented appliances whenever possible.
- Use kerosene space heaters and unvented gas heaters only in well ventilated rooms.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector with an audible alarm in your home and garage.

ABOUT CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS:

Carbon monoxide detectors should meet Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. standards; have a long-term warranty; and be easily self-tested and reset to ensure proper functioning. For maximum effectiveness during sleeping hours, carbon monoxide detectors should be placed as close to sleeping areas as possible.

WHAT TO DO IF THE CO DETECTOR ALARM GOES OFF:

Make sure it is your CO detector and not your smoke detector. Check to see if any member of the household is experiencing symptoms of poisoning. If they are, get them out of the house immediately and seek medical attention. Tell the doctor that you suspect CO poisoning. If no one is feeling symptoms, ventilate the home with fresh air, turn off all potential sources of CO -- your oil or gas furnace, gas water heater, gas range and oven, gas dryer, gas or kerosene space heater and any vehicle or small engine. Have a qualified technician inspect your fuel-burning appliances and chimneys to make sure they are operating correctly and that there is nothing blocking the fumes from being vented out of the house.

BUYING AND MAINTAINING A WOOD STOVE

(provided by the American Lung Association)

Many people love the warmth and beauty of a fire in their wood stove or fireplace. But although wood is a "natural" fuel, like other fuels it creates air pollution and health hazards, both indoors and out, especially if it isn't burned correctly. Using your wood stove properly saves you money, time, and work. Here are some tips from the American Lung Association for safe, clean, and economical use of your wood stove or fireplace:



- ✓ Make sure you choose the right size stove for your home. A stove that is too large for the space to be heated will be inefficient, create more pollution, and may make your family uncomfortable.
- ✓ Look for a stove with a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency certification label. An EPA- certified stove is built and tested to give off less pollution, to need less fuel and less frequent cleaning, and to be less of a fire hazard.
- ✓ Read your owner's manual carefully and follow directions for clean, efficient use of the stove. Incorrect use of the stove can cancel out your other money-saving actions.
- ✓ Installation of wood stoves, flues and chimneys should be done by a professional. If you are experienced enough to do it yourself, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Then, have your work inspected by a local fire or building inspector.
- ✓ Check with local officials to see if a permit is needed in your area and what local installation codes must be followed.
- ✓ The heat from your stove can be retained longer by installing brick or stone near it. See your stove's operating guide for approved materials.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

- To start a fire in your wood stove or fireplace: Open the air controls and damper to make it easier for the fire to catch. Place thin, dry sticks of wood over a small piece of newspaper and light with a match.
- Once the fire is going, keep the draft wide open until the stove gets hot enough. You can attach a surface thermometer to the top of your stove to monitor the temperature of the fire inside. A surface temperature in the range of 300 to 500 degrees F means the stove is working properly and the wood is burning completely. If the temperature falls below 300 degrees, add more wood or open the air controls a little more.
- Feed the fire frequently with small loads of wood, two or three pieces at a time, which are more efficient than large loads in most stoves. (Check the manual for your particular stove.)
- Don't dampen the fire down too much. Too much dampening will make a smoky fire that can release smoke into your home when you open the firebox door. It also increases soot build-up and the risk of chimney fires.
- Empty ashes from the firebox into a metal container as needed.
- Watch your chimney. If you see heavy smoke coming out, your wood is not burning completely or efficiently.
- Check the stovepipe and chimney at least once a month to remove soot (creosote) build-up. Have the chimney regularly swept and inspected by a professional and thoroughly cleaned at least once a year, before the heating season begins.
- Check the stovepipe once a month for corrosion, especially at elbow joints. Once a year, you should inspect and clean the entire system: Check stove panels and parts for cracks or warps. Check all gaskets and joints to make sure they are tight.
- If you have a catalytic stove, make sure that the catalyst is clean and the bypass valve works freely. Repair or replace any damaged pieces.
- Don't burn on bad air quality days, if possible. Follow local health and air pollution warnings and use your gas or oil furnace or electricity for heat until the air quality in your area improves.
- Wood stoves manufactured before July 1, 1988 are less efficient, and as a result emit more pollution than newer wood stoves. This is true for both indoor and outdoor air pollution.

THE RIGHT WOOD FUEL

- ❑ Buy or cut your wood six months to a year in advance and "season" it by stacking it under cover in a way that keeps the rain off and allows air to circulate easily through the pile. Seasoning reduces the moisture content in the wood, making it better for burning. It also makes wood lighter, so it's easier to carry. Hardwoods, such as oak, maple, beech, ash, and hickory, make the best fuel. They burn more cleanly than softwoods such as fir or pine.
- ❑ Burn only 100 percent wood. NEVER BURN: green, wet, painted, or treated wood; wood products that contain glue, binders or chemicals; trash or garbage; plastics; magazines, colored paper or gift wrap. These materials give off harmful chemicals, more smoke and pollution, and less heat. Do not burn coal in a wood stove.



Fire Prevention Week 2000

Fire Prevention Week is October 8-14

The theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign is "Fire Drills: The Great Escape!" This year's "The Great Escape" (a.k.a. the world's largest fire drill) will take place on Wednesday, October 11, at 7:00 p.m. (local times may vary). "The Great Escape" is a fun, family-oriented activity that gets the public actively involved in home fire planning and practice. Over the past two years, NFPA has documented 58 lives saved as a direct result of this campaign. With help from fire safety advocates throughout the United States and Canada, our goal is to make sure more families are truly prepared to survive a home fire than ever before.



It's easy to get started!

Whether you're a fire service member looking to conduct "The Great Escape" in your community this October, or just looking for more information on home fire escape planning and practice, check the web at <http://www.firepreventionweek.org/>

Why "The Great Escape?"

Too few people develop and practice home fire escape plans, and this lack of planning can prove deadly in a home fire. In 1998, NFPA, the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week (FPW) since 1922, launched "The Great Escape" as a three-year public safety campaign to increase the number of North Americans (primarily young children and their families) who have developed and practiced a home fire escape plan. Held during Fire Prevention Week, "The Great Escape" centers around a unified North American fire drill and two grand prize contests for all fire drill participants.

National Child Health Day 2000 Will Emphasize Early Childhood Development

Early childhood development will be the theme for the upcoming National Child Health Day, scheduled for Oct. 2, HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau has announced.

"With the slogan 'Mission 2000: Early Childhood, Launching Healthy Futures,' this year's activities will focus on the physical, mental and social development of children ages 0-5," says Peter C. van Dyck, M.D., M.P.H., HRSA associate administrator for maternal and child health. "We'll emphasize the ways families, schools and communities can help children achieve their full potential during these critical years."

Each year, MCHB puts together an information kit on a different theme (tobacco, alcohol or substance abuse, for example), which can be used by states, schools, public health agencies, child care centers, counties and local

communities for their own National Child Health Day activities. Designed with space-age graphics, this year's kit contains brochures, posters and educational materials on early childhood development, nutrition, safe child care, and injury and violence prevention.

National Child Health Day was first proclaimed by President Calvin Coolidge in 1928, who declared it "appropriate that a day should be set apart each year for the direction of our thought toward the health and well-being of our children." It is celebrated on the first Monday in October.

To obtain a National Child Health Day information kit, call the National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse at 1-888-434-4MCH (624). For more information, contact the MCHB Communications Office at (301) 443-0205.